

Remarks

Claims 1- 32 were pending, and claims 11-32 were drawn to a non-elected species. In response to the finality of the restriction requirement, claims 11-32 have been cancelled without prejudice to advance the prosecution of this application. Claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 10 have been amended while claim 6 has been cancelled and claim 33 has been added. Applicants assert that the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance as set forth more fully below.

Telephone Interview

The undersigned participated in a telephone interview with the Examiner on October 18, 2004. The 101 rejection was discussed in relation to recitations of computer files, computer systems, and computer networks relation to the section 101 rejection. The 112 rejections were discussed in relation to proper amendments. The 103 rejections were discussed in relation to method claim elements not provided by the cited references such as receiving the service orders from customers that affect the account number, creating electronic service order entries for the service orders, and additional elements as recited in the claims.

101 Rejections

Claims 1-10 have been rejected under 35 USC 101 as failing to recite statutory subject matter due to the omission of terminology that falls within the “technological arts.” Without conceding to the necessity of the “technological arts” terminology, Applicants have amended claims 1-10 to include recitations to computers, computer data entries, computer update files and a computer network. Applicants assert that the amendments to the claims fully address the 101 rejection and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

112 Rejections

Claims 1-10 have been rejected under 35 USC 112 second paragraph as being indefinite. In particular, claim 1 has been rejected due to search for flagged entries that indicate an account number change when the flagged entries only show that they

correspond to electronic billing customers. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the entries include information indicating that an account number change has resulted in addition to the flagging that is indicative of an electronic billing customer. Additionally, claim 1 has been rejected due to the step of reformatting first requiring that the flagged entries be placed in a separate file, and claim 1 has been amended to recite a new file for this purpose. Applicants assert that claim 1 is allowable over the 112 rejection.

Claims 2, 3, and 10 have been rejected as being indefinite for failing to functionally relate. Each of these claims has been amended to more directly relate the recitations to elements of claim 1. Applicants assert that claims 2, 3, and 10 are allowable over the 112 rejection.

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected as being indefinite because the manner of searching does not affect any other process limitation. To the extent this rejection is based on the 112 rejection of claim 1 relating to the searching element, the amendment for claim 1 also overcomes this rejection of claims 4 and 5. However, to the extent this rejection might be intended to state that the manner of searching as set forth in claim 4 and claim 5 must also limit the elements of reformatting and transmitting, Applicants respectfully disagree. In either case, Applicants assert that claims 4 and 5 are allowable over the 112 rejection.

103 Rejections

Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(A) as being unpatentable over Hendrix (US Pat 5,893,088) in view of Narurkar (US Pat 6,711,624). The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Office Action has asserted that Hendrix teaches all of the elements of claim 1 except does not assert that Hendrix discloses transmitting the reformatted entries over a computer network. However, the Office Action further states that Narurkar discloses reformatting data files and then transmitting the reformatted data files to remote hosts.

Amended claim 1 recites, among other things, receiving service orders from the customers, wherein one or more of the service orders results in an account number change and wherein a billing computer system of the electronic billing vendor utilizes the account number being changed. Claim 1 further recites creating electronic service order

entries within a service order computer system of a service provider based on the received service orders, wherein information is included within each electronic service order entry to indicate that the account number has changed for the customer when the service order results in the account number change. Additionally, claim 1 recites searching the update computer file for flagged entries that include the information that indicates an account number change and creating a new file that includes the flagged electronic service order entries that include the information that indicates an account number change that have been found by the search. The flagged electronic service order entries of the new file that include the information that indicates account number changes are reformatted to a record format compatible with the billing computer system of the electronic billing vendor and are transmitted over a computer network to the billing computer system of the electronic billing vendor.

Thus, the electronic service order entries are created based on service orders received from customers and at least some entries include both information indicating the account number change and also are flagged for electronic billing customers. Therefore, the search may then look for both flagged entries and entries that indicate the account number has been changed so that the entries being reformatted and transmitted are those that pertain to the electronic billing vendor computer system and that require the electronic billing vendor computer system to modify the account number of customers.

Neither Hendrix nor Narurkar disclose receiving service orders from customers and creating electronic service order entries based on the received service orders. Furthermore, neither of these references discloses such entries that contain both flags for electronic billing as well as information indicating an account number change such that these entries containing both may be searched for, reformatted as appropriate, and transmitted to a separate system for billing. Accordingly, these references lack several of the features recited in claim 1, and claim 1 is allowable over the cited references for at least these reasons.

Dependent claims 2-5, 7-10, and 33 depend from an allowable claim 1 and are also allowable for at least the same reasons. Furthermore, one or more of claims 2-5, 7-10, and 33 recite additional features that are allowable over the cited references. For example, claim 33 recites that the new file with the reformatted entries is received by the

billing computer system over the computer network, and that the billing computer system modifies records based on the entries, including modifying the account numbers of customers. Additionally, claim 33 recites generating electronic bills for the customers with the modified customer numbers. Neither Hendrix nor Narurkar disclose generating electronic bills based on the modified customer numbers such that claim 33 is allowable for these additional reasons.


Conclusion

Applicants assert that the application including claims 1-5, 7-10, and 33 is now in condition for allowance. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the amendments and remarks above and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,

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